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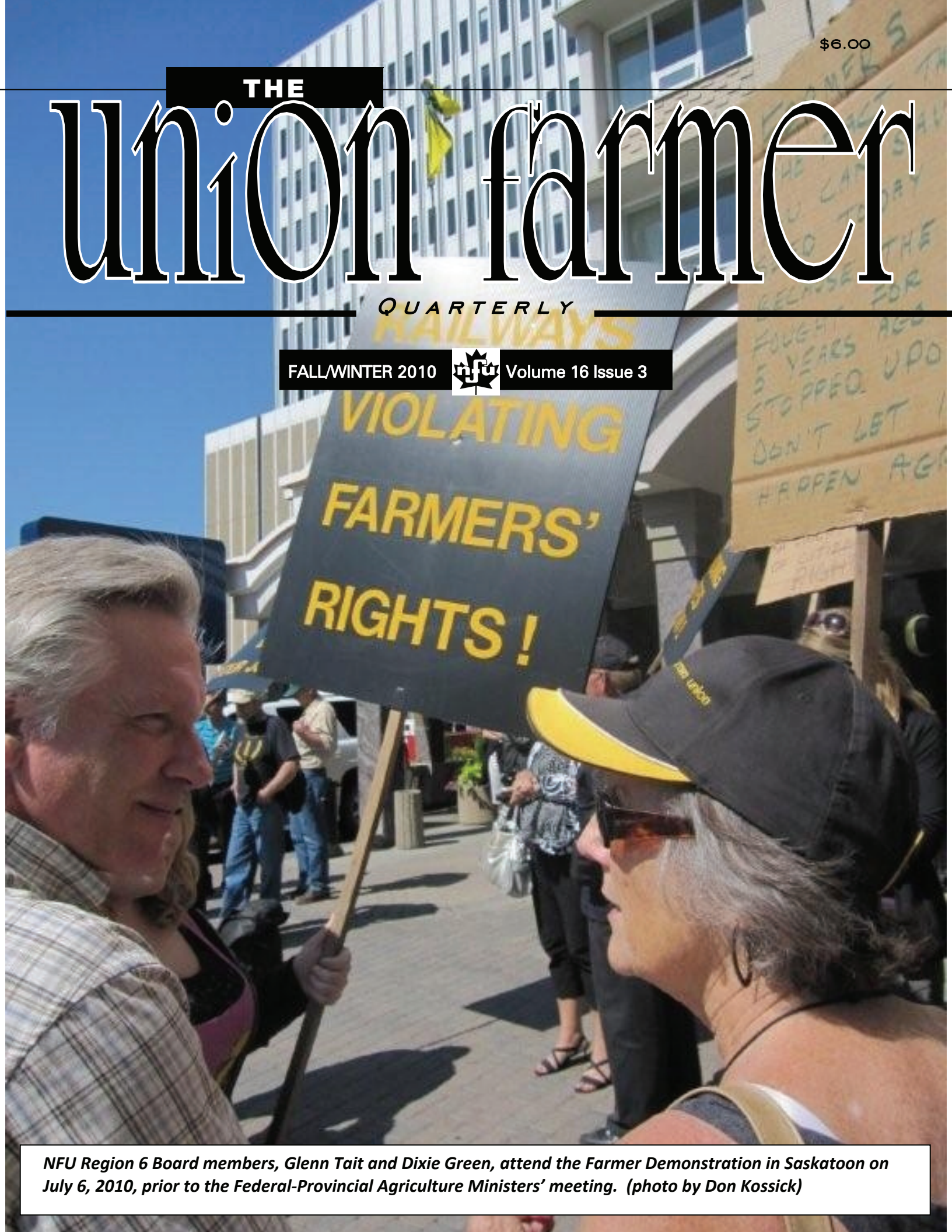
# THE union farmer

QUARTERLY

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Volume 16 Issue 3



*NFU Region 6 Board members, Glenn Tait and Dixie Green, attend the Farmer Demonstration in Saskatoon on July 6, 2010, prior to the Federal-Provincial Agriculture Ministers' meeting. (photo by Don Kossick)*

## Message from the Editor...



Kevin Wipf

The NFU's 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention will be taking place this December 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> in Saskatoon, and it promises to be yet another interesting and engaging event.

Over the years the convention has served a very important role for the NFU. It is an opportunity for delegates from across the country to debate and decide, policy and plans of action. It is also a chance for delegates to share stories about their farming activities, their families, and other topics with old friends. Finally, the convention is an occasion to appreciate and learn about the full range of issues that exist among the various regions.

This year's theme is "Economics of Alternatives," which explores the alternatives to the dominant industrial model of agriculture, and assesses their viability as options for farmers.

Two speakers and several panels will address this year's theme.

The keynote speaker at this year's convention will be prominent Canadian author, Yann Martel. His most notable book, *Life of Pi*, won the Man Booker Prize in 2002. His latest book, *Beatrice and Virgil*, just appeared on the shelves earlier this year. Martel holds office at the University of Saskatchewan as a scholar-in-residence. In 2007 Martel began a project entitled *What Is Stephen*

*Harper Reading?* Every two weeks he mails a book and personal letter to the Prime Minister, and documents it on the project's web page. The project is an effort to influence Stephen Harper during his moments of "stillness." The idea is to have Harper read books that explore issues from a different perspective from the one that he takes.

The wrap-up speaker, Wayne Roberts, possesses considerable expertise in alternative models of agriculture. Roberts possesses a PhD in social and economic history from the University of Toronto. In addition, he has written seven books including *Get A Life* (1995), a manual on green economics, and *Real Food for a Change* (1999), which promotes a food system based on the four ingredients of health, joy, justice and nature. Roberts currently manages the Toronto Food Policy Council, a citizen body of 30 food activists and experts that is widely recognized for its innovative approach to food security. He has also been a leading member of the City of Toronto's Environmental Task Force, which helped develop an Environmental Plan and a Food Charter. Roberts' also writes a weekly column for NOW Magazine.

Be sure to make your travel plans and book your hotel room early. The hotel phone number is on the back page of this issue.

I look forward to meeting you in Saskatoon in early December!

—nfu—

## union farmer quarterly

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*We believe a strong rural community in Canada is an essential part of our national culture. In the National Farmers Union, we work collectively to strengthen the farm community by: building ties between farmers in all parts of Canada, with farmers in other countries and with non-farm people; ensuring all people have access to an adequate, nutritious and safely-produced food supply; promoting equity for women and young people in the farming community; promoting social support systems that permit people in farming communities a good quality of life; promoting the development and maintenance of a Canadian infrastructure to serve Canadian goals in food production and trade; and helping governments to form fair and constructive policies related to food production and food trade.*





# A message from the...



## National President

—by Terry Boehm

Greetings to all NFU members and supporters.

I have had the good fortune to travel to many district meetings across the country this summer. I visited the Peace River country of northern Alberta, as well as the Maritime provinces. Closer to home, I attended both the Saskatchewan and Manitoba summer conventions. I had the opportunity to speak at each of these meetings, listen to what was happening in each district, and discover some of the characteristics of these distinct regions. I focused on speaking about the dangers of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Commission, which is being negotiated at this time. I also spoke about our Land Grab report.

In many respects, much of what we are talking about in the Farmers Union is the defense of small- and medium-sized family farms in Canada. This defense takes many forms, and unfortunately, for many years all we have been able to do is to defend many of the things that our predecessors fought hard to build. We have drawn clear lines in the sand over issues related to the Canadian Grain Commission, Canadian Wheat Board, farm saved seed, local abattoirs, prison farms, stopping unfair concentration in meat packing, mediating the powers of railways and grain and seed multinationals, and supply management systems. The fight to protect these things never ends. However, to keep people involved and inspired, we need to start building again. We need to start taking over the political processes with our allies beyond farming.

I have been very impressed with what many of our members are doing both on their individual farms, and beyond. My family and I

were graciously hosted by Peter and Levke Eggers; Ted, Elaine and Kalissa Regier; Cammie Harbottle and Yuill Herbert; Betty and Ron Brown; and Randall and Jackie Affleck. It was great to meet so many of you in your home provinces and locals. What was very striking was the intelligence and hard work you all displayed in going about your lives as farmers and citizens. I think that the NFU has a great resource of thoughtful people who apply their analyses equally well to their farms, and to their communities and country as a whole. All of this work brings a certain degree of fatigue as well, and I would like to thank all of you for your dedication. I would extend this to all of our members and supporters.

What struck me in the Maritimes was the degree of domination corporations like McCains and Cavendish Farms have over potato farmers in particular. It is a model similar to what Tyson does to chicken farmers in the U.S. Farmers must buy their supplies from them at their price, build facilities to their specifications, and then sell their production back to them at their price once again. In this system the potato farmers lose all autonomy and all chance to earn a decent living. This is a model that is in store for the rest of us in agriculture via trade agreements, and the control of seeds and animal genetics that is being consolidated right now. That is unless we stand up and say no with our allies, and start to build systems that work for us instead of against us. Why could we not as an organization develop seed varieties that are cheaply and collaboratively distributed amongst our farmer members as a single example of taking back control? The regulatory environment is being redesigned to protect corporations and extend their influence. But, we need to hold "our" and I emphasize OUR bureaucrats up to a higher standard of acting in the public interest. The same goes for our politicians. If they are unable to understand and differentiate the public good from the corporate, they need to be replaced. This, of course, means participating in political parties and processes. But, we are capable and we need the vision to redefine things; many of you already have it. Let's make it felt.

*In solidarity, Terry Boehm*



# A message from the...



## Women's President

— by Joan Brady

**I**t's the end of summer and the harvest season is soon upon us. Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (AAFC) predicts that another year that averages below zero income awaits the farming community. Once again it is our role as the NFU to fight for not only our livelihoods, but all of the supporting structures that make family farms and strong rural communities possible.

At a consultation conducted by AAFC, which I attended in June, the ministry was seeking input on the next suite of agricultural policy framework (APF) programs. They sought direction as to which farms and commodities, if any, should be supported by the public purse and what areas of should be highlighted for increased attention. AAFC's message was that farms should respond to market signals and based on sound business management be able to adapt, exit, or meet new challenges with innovative solutions. They predicted that with an increasing population – the demand for food would be strong. Current agricultural land base and water reserves were limited so the supply was finite. The experts at AAFC decreed that primary production would need to lower their cost of production in order to compete effectively on the world market.

Simple economics states: if demand is high and supply low then a resulting increase in price should follow. The “race to the bottom” approach presented at the AAFC consultation surely did not fit that scenario and once again points to a dysfunctional market place, one which is imbalanced and artificial and which does not recognize the importance of stability and responsiveness of the domestic industry. When redundant trade (the same goods imported and exported) is factored into Canadian production, over 60% of Canadian agricultural products are consumed at home. Only a strong and vital domestic industry will be the jumping off point for global opportunities.

Since that consultation, I have been apprised of various cuts to supports in rural Canada. Much of the economic recovery program designed by the current government to reduce the effects of the Global Economic Crisis has been directed toward urban centres. In Ontario, in particular, business development funds have not been as available to the rural agencies that seek to build a strong and diverse rural business community. Cuts in funding to the University of Guelph have resulted in a loss or reduction of 45% of its agriculturally focused curriculum. The School for Rural Planning is slated for closure and as the only one of its kind in North America; this will mean a loss of planning professionals with an understanding and passion for agriculture and rural communities. Finally the elimination of the Census Canada mandatory long form will certainly affect community development and the assessment of the quality of rural life. It is uncertain if the changes at Census Canada will affect the agricultural census and diligence must ensure that the statistics that much of the NFU's work has been based on remain universally available.

It is time to get back to the basics! If AAFC suggests that agriculture need be responsive to market signals; then a functional and predictable marketplace must be defined and implemented. If science and innovation is touted as the solution to current market issues; then the capacity of risk to small rural business owners and farmers must be restored to allow them to both respond and reap the benefits of these innovative solutions. An expanded extension service, advanced and available post-secondary education and small business supports will foster an atmosphere of positive growth in rural Canada and create a reverberation of opportunities in urban areas. If the potential for increased demand for food and the finite supply of land and water has been recognized; then our government needs to put the needs and future of Canadians first and protect not only our resources but our ability to determine their usage and sustainability.

I often tell my children that they are very valuable and I will be glad to both fight with them and fight for them to ensure that they become the best they can be. That is my approach to these issues: I hope you will join me in first making sure that AAFC understand the issues and the variable effectiveness of their programming and policies and then support them in seeking positive solutions that work for farm families and rural Canada.

*In solidarity, Joan Brady*



# A message from the...



## Youth President

— Kalissa Regier

**I**t was a summer of interesting projects and battered spirits among the prairies. Now, as we head into the harvest season, I can reflect on how another challenging year has shaped my own spirit, adding a bit of fuel to the fire along the way.

For many prairie farmers, this season was a continual source of frustration. For many others, it may well be their last season on the farm. Sadly, the numbers simply won't add up after another meager harvest and too many debts. Natural disasters, such as the flooding on the prairies this season, expose the environmental and economic vulnerability of farmers. It's a shock to the system when something so widespread happens.

Unfortunately, it seems to me that it's the small, often over-looked factors that contribute greatly to our inability to "weather the storm". The erosion of farmer protection is continuing at a steady pace with the possible amendments to the Plant Breeders Rights Act. These amendments directly threaten our ability to save and reuse our own seed, something essential to the survival of the family farm. The Plant Breeders Rights Act changes are being proposed as a small part of the larger Canada-European Union Trade Agreement, known as CETA, a trade agreement that seems to be hiding essential information from Canadians.

### Convention Update

The National Convention is fast approaching and will again be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Saskatoon from December 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010. We are excited to be planning the youth activities including a young farmer panel during convention, the

annual youth caucus meeting, activities for the Campaign for New Farmers and elections for the National Board of Directors.

### Bursaries Available

The NFU Youth is again offering bursaries to help cover the cost of attending National Convention. Four bursaries of \$250.00 are available to NFU Youth members across the country. Please email me at [kjregier@gmail.com](mailto:kjregier@gmail.com) with any questions or to receive an application form. Deadline for applications is October 31, 2010.

### Campaign for New Farmers

Please visit the Campaign for New Farmers on the web at [www.nfuyouth.wordpress.com](http://www.nfuyouth.wordpress.com) for more information on what's happening and to find out how you can join in.

*In Solidarity, Kalissa Regier*

## **SILENT AUCTION**

There will be a silent auction held throughout this year's convention as a great and highly entertaining way to raise funds for NFU Youth and Women's programming. Our 2009 silent auction raised over \$3700 that went towards core funding of projects such as the annual youth gathering. Thanks for your continued support!

***Members are once again encouraged to bring items to donate for the silent auction.***





# and Youth Vice President

— Cammie Harbottle

This season has been challenging, and in some cases devastating, for many farmers in the prairies and across the country. I too suffered significant losses to summer and storage crops from exceptionally heavy rains throughout June and July (7 inches in one week and 5 inches the next!). Unbelievably, it all seems minor in the face of what is happening in Pakistan.

In light of these tough times and in the spirit of the Campaign for New Farmers, I want to tell you a few inspiring stories about new farmers who have come through my farm this summer.

First, a group of four young farmers including two NFU Youth: Alex Fletcher and Virginie Lavalée-Picard. These four embarked last May on a cycling tour of Eastern Canada and the United States to explore farming opportunities, models of land tenure, and small scale farming systems by visiting a variety of farms and farmers along the way. In late June, the group landed at our farm and spent a few days with us. After hundreds of kilometers behind the handlebars, the group has documented a compilation of opportunities, ideas, systems and techniques which will be a great resource for themselves and other beginning farmers. If we are lucky, we will get to hear more about the 'Seeking Farmland' cycle tour at the national convention in December. You can check out their blog at: <https://seekingfarmland.wordpress.com>.

The second inspiring visit was from Greg Wood of Hillside Organics. Rather than retire from farming, Greg is retiring into farming; in Newfoundland of all places. Greg has spent many years as an educator of all ages from elementary to university and recently decided that he is going to begin picking rocks and digging stumps and turn his land into an organic vegetable farm.

This summer he is visiting and working on other farms around the Maritimes to gather skills and techniques to bring back to the rock. You can tell he is serious as he was up and ready to go every morning by 6 am. As in many communities in Canada, there are new farmers markets springing up in Newfoundland and he is determined to be part of that movement.

A final inspiring event was the opening of the Halifax Seaport Farmers Market. This project cost more than \$10 million dollars, is fully owned by a co-operative of venders and was partially financed by community members through RRSPs. The building itself has a living roof, a living wall and is heated by a heat exchanger in the ocean and solar panels. Rumour has it that more than 20,000 people showed up for the first weekend, and judging by the crowds there weren't many fewer people the second weekend.

In conclusion, on the negative side, it feels like we are starting to have to learn to farm with the complicated impacts of climate change. On the positive side, it seems like everywhere I turn, there is innovation and creativity amongst farmers of all ages.

*In Union, Cammie Harbottle*





# Regional Reports



## ONE (PEI)

### REGION



- by Randall Affleck

### Regional 1 Convention

The regional convention was held in Grand Falls, New Brunswick this year and had a

full line-up of interesting speakers. Minister of Agriculture for NB, Ronald Ouellette addressed the delegates and answered questions. New Brunswick's election date is fixed for September 27th. NFU President Terry Boehm gave a speech explaining some of the details and ramifications discovered in a leaked draft copy of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) being negotiated between Canada and the European Union. Later that week, Mr. Boehm attended a NFU meet-and-greet on PEI, and participated in a round table discussion about the CETA. He also was interviewed by several media while in the region. Reg Phelan and Ann Wheatley reported on the Fair Trade workshops and study recently completed on PEI. In the afternoon, Dr. Darrel McLaughlin gave a presentation on prices in the Canadian beef industry. Jennifer Scott from GPI Atlantic shared the results of her study into economic research they have been doing on agriculture in the Maritimes. Members travelled to the nearby Laforge Dairy Farm to view their methane production facility currently under construction with a scheduled start-up in September. That evening, the NFU organized a banquet to honour the PVYn Affected Growers Inc. committee. Wayne Easter, current MP for Malpeque, PEI, was guest speaker and spoke about the work of the NFU on the PVYn issue, which started in 1991 while he was President of the NFU.

### Maritime Electric Rates

The Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission (IRAC) issued an order on July 12th regarding power rates on PEI. The order requires Maritime Electric to retain a 2000 kWh second block reduced rate, and include consideration of this issue in a rate design proposal to be filed with IRAC by December 31,

2011. The NFU presented a brief regarding the rate structure changes and the negative effects this would have on farmers. Maritime Electric is trying to move the residential rate structure from a two-block billing structure to a single-block billing structure. Maritime Electric residential customers, which include most farms on PEI, were billed two different rates depending on how much energy they consumed. Rates on the second block, amounts over 2000 kWh, are billed at lower rate. Originally the first block was cut off at 1200 kWh. The change could have increased rates to some farmers by almost 15% in some cases during one of the worst times in history for farm incomes. Island farmers are paying 13 cents per kWh this past year, the highest energy rate in Canada.

### PEI Natural Products Appeal Tribunal Decision on Cavendish Farms Inc. Appeal

The Natural Products Appeal Tribunal upheld a PEI Potato Board Order titled "Potato Processing Contract Negotiation Order" appealed by Cavendish Farms Inc., which set out a process for establishing the terms and conditions of the processing contract. The processing contract included the creation of a negotiating committee, a ratification process, and a negotiation period to reach an agreement not later than the last Friday in March, prior to being sent to a mediator and then to an arbitrator if no agreement has been reached prior to April 15th. Over the past couple of years, contract price and volumes were not known to growers until June and July, well after planting had to be completed. The average cost of production for an acre of processing potatoes was \$2,902 in 2009. The decision is documented at the following website address if folks are interested in learning more about the potato contracting process;  
[http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/af\\_NPTA\\_ug2010.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/af_NPTA_ug2010.pdf)

(continued on page 8...)



# ONE (New Brunswick)

## REGION



- by Betty Brown

It is hard to believe we are at the end of summer. In my area, Northwestern New Brunswick, we have had a hot, dry summer. Crops were planted earlier than normal due to warm, dry spring along with little precipitation this winter. The first grain harvest began in July, with much of the barley and wheat harvest completed. Soybeans, corn, and canola crops are growing well, and I'm told prices are increasing. It has been stressful trying to complete the haying as we had very humid weather in July, not the best for dry hay.

The number of hog and beef farmers has dwindled due to market conditions. Although hog prices have risen some, beef prices have not.

On August 7<sup>th</sup> the NFU in New Brunswick hosted the NFU regional convention in Grand Falls. The convention was followed by an appreciation dinner for the PVYn directors, who worked on behalf of potato farmers for seventeen years to obtain a settlement from the government. We were very pleased to have Terry Boehm, NFU President, attend both events. We want to thank him for taking time from his farming activities to visit Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

Several members from PEI attended and Randal did an excellent job of chairing the convention. We hope Terry and his family have taken home good memories of their eastern visit. Wayne Easter, MP, was a guest speaker at the dinner as well.

New Brunswick will have a provincial election September 21<sup>st</sup>. Campaigning is very low key. We are waiting for the meetings to start so we can put forward our issues. I have been contacted by both the Green and NDP parties asking me to be a candidate. I declined both offers. Both parties seem determined to find as many women candidates as possible. I have asked both parties to give me their opinion of Canada-European Union Trade Agreement (known as CETA), and those who called didn't know what I was talking about.

I am talking with reporters and any politicians I encounter about CETA. This is one trade agreement we cannot allow the government to sign, given the information in the draft text we have reviewed.

We continue with our membership recruitment and our "buy local" campaign. Barb Somerville is in charge of our newsletters, which are distributed to our membership, commodity boards, other farm organizations, and placed in various facilities where people can read them.

I encourage farmers to attend the 41<sup>st</sup> annual convention to be held in Saskatoon, December 2 – 4, 2010. Information is available on the website.

Hope all farmers have a good harvest and good weather.

*In Union, Betty Brown*

*(Region 1 PEI, from page 7)*

The weather has been quite favourable this summer, with excellent growing conditions. Hoping no hurricanes blow through this fall!

I watched *Regis and Kellie* for the first time in my life. That was a fluffy hour of my life lost forever! The occasion, of course, was that the New York based talk show came to PEI for a couple of days and taped four shows on the water front in Charlottetown. The PEI Government paid them \$800,000 dollars to do it, and sadly it seems to have been successful;

PEI was number two on Google search requests and Islanders were terribly excited about all the fuss. All the government branding bean counters were ecstatic with the marketing results. While I am happy that everybody is so "happy", isn't it more than a little sad that we have to prostitute ourselves on an American talk show about nothing to be successful at getting people's attention. Some days it's just hard trying to make the case that humans are higher order pattern recognizing primates.

*In Union, Randall Affleck*





## REGION

## THREE (Ontario)



- by Sean McGivern

***The Future Is Resilience***

We in Ontario were blessed this growing season with a great abundant harvest, some of the best crop yields ever achieved on our own farm for that matter. However, great crop yields are generally met with low crop prices, which seem to be the case once again this year. The recent wild fires disaster in Russia has caused domestic wheat prices to rally here in Canada. In 2009 Russia was among the three largest exporters of wheat in the world. Last year its wheat crop was over 100 million tons, while this year's crop is expected to be down by 25 million tons. It is unfortunate that good crop prices at this point in history require a disaster somewhere else in the world for farmers to be paid a fair price for their crop.

I strongly believe that we must build, adapt and change the way in which we conduct our farming here in Canada. We need to build more resilience into our farms, we need to rely less on external inputs, and to develop more self-sufficient farming models that allow us independence from the grip of the multinational corporations that have a strangle-hold on most "independent" farmers. Many of you are already well aware of such things as cover crops, seed saving, crop rotations, biodiversity, and not putting all of your eggs into one basket. Yet, there are many who seem to not pay attention to, or just simply ignore, the need for such things. These farmers are more like miners and less like farmers.

We are at a point in history that will never repeat itself as we continue to deplete our fossil fuel supplies not just nationally, but more importantly globally. Canada currently exports 66% of its crude oil at about 2.527 million barrels per day, and is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest global oil producer worldwide. However, we are not unlike the larger oil producing nations, which are all approaching or have already approached peak oil production. Already 54

of the top 65 oil producing nations have passed peak oil production.

Oil production and exploration graphs look much like a bell curve over the last 100 years. We have climbed up the left side of the bell. This is the side to which oil was the most easily extracted like the famous pictures of old where the oil literally blew out of the ground under pressure and it was the cheapest to extract. As we now slide down the right side of the bell curve we are mining the most difficult and lowest grades of oil and the energy required to mine this oil is greatly increased. It only makes sense that we exploited the easiest oil first. However, this has led us to the point of no return.

Most people envision oil drillers, drilling a hole in the ground hitting a lake of never-ending oil and continuously pumping it out. However, drilling for oil is more like drilling a water well. As you drill down into the rock for thousands of feet, the oil seeps out of small veins in the rock, flows into the well chamber, and is then pumped out of the ground.

Fossil fuels have allowed us a life never imagined by our forefathers. Here in Canada alone we consume more than 41 billion liters of gasoline annually. To put that into perspective, the value of one barrel of oil is equal to 25,000 man hours of labor. One barrel of sweet crude will produce around 20 gallons of gasoline. So one barrel of oil would be like having 12 people working on your farm, for 40 hours per week, for 52 weeks, with no holidays, no sick days, just working day-in and day-out.

In the past, before the wide-spread use of oil on farms at the turn of the century, it was understood that one person could produce about 20- 30% more food than they required for his/herself. As we have to keep in mind, they had to work at many more things other than just producing their own food, and food production was done mostly by hand labour, with the help of some harnessed animal power. The bell curve for peak oil repeats itself over-and-over again as we look into other finite natural resources. So, don't assume we can just now tap into another supply of finite resources. The problem is that they too are dwindling and we have no national

*(continued on page 23...)*



## REGION

## FIVE (Manitoba)



- by Ian Robson

NFU Region 5 Convention was held July 24, 2010 at Onanole, and had good membership participation. A range of speakers provided information and ideas. It is great to attend, listen, express, and debate, suggestions on farming concerns. Members heard speakers and proposed resolutions on farm issues.

Former NFU Vice President Fred Tait expressed concern about the Manitoba Government's ability to meet its own 2013 environmental phosphorous rules. Excess phosphorus runoff is causing water quality issues in the Lake Winnipeg drainage basin. The targeted regulation of Phosphorus application to match required use might never be enforced and be indefinitely delayed.

Hudson Bay Route Association President, Arnold Grambo commented on the benefits of shipping through Churchill Manitoba. He noted that Churchill grain shipment is because of the Canadian Wheat Board's (CWB) ability to negotiate deals with the grain buyers. Churchill would be disadvantaged if the Federal Government reduces the abilities of the CWB by turning the grain trade over to companies with their own handling facilities located elsewhere.

Our own Ruth Pryzner has researched new food safety systems and expressed concerns about what she has found. Large-scale, industrial food inspection systems are being developed. She found that corner-cutting and spotty inspections are creating confidence problems for farmers and consumers. She argued that local food systems and small scale processing competence with inspection would be superior options.

NFU President Terry Boehm obtained a leaked draft copy of the proposed Canada-European Union Free Trade Agreement. This deal seeks to further limit farmers' right to use their own seed. UPOV 91 rules would be used and would help deliver the seed market to Seed/Chemical companies who charge extra because of patents. EU has reserved its right to limit GMO imports.

Terry Boehm spoke of the NFU report, *Losing Our Grip*, that tracks land buy-up through investment deals and difficulties with farm debt levels.

Bill Nicholson, CWB Director for District 9, explained how our CWB is able to negotiate for and brand our product to obtain better prices for farmers. Sales services inspire buyers to pay for our grains. The CWB has picked up business because of the loss of the Australian Wheat Board. Australian farmers are now facing 23 companies who try to sell their wheat competitively resulting in lower farm gate prices in Australia and unhappy customers because of shipping delays and quality issues. Director Nicholson has capably innovated and guided the CWB and defended the CWB advantage for farmers these past twelve years. He is now retiring and farmers must vote for another equally qualified Director.

The CWB election for odd numbered districts are being held this fall. Please vote and rank all candidates who clearly support the CWB with single-desk selling. Be wary of those who would seek to undermine the CWB by concepts of 'flexibility', 'choice', 'dual market', or some 'innovative' way to really just implement an 'open market'.

NFU Region 5 held elections for Executive roles. Bev Stow and Ian Robson were elected to serve on the National Board; Kate Storey was elected to Women's Advisory Committee; and Annalisa Schoppe was elected to Youth Advisory Committee.

Resolutions were discussed on: Stable Funding of Manitoba Farm Organizations; having the NFU organize a Food Safety Symposium; Support for C-474- GMO market assessment before release; and Support for C-548 farmer control of the CWB.

The Minister of Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Development, Stan Struthers, addressed our convention and challenged the NFU and other farm groups to meet with him to give policy recommendations. The Region 5 NFU will take the challenge. We are concerned about: check offs to fund general farm organizations, CWB elections, Food Safety/Local markets, Canada European Union Free Trade Deal, Land Grab investment schemes, Young Farmers concerns, Emergency flood/drought/low price programs, Marketing Boards and Quota's, Climate change, what is the current Manitoba Government 'Vision' for farmers, keeping the Canadian Grain Commission license/bonding requirements (we do not need a check off/self insurance to cover defunct grain traders), and crop variety testing information is needed by farmers (some companies are not placing their seeds into fairly designed field trails for reporting data).

*In Union, Ian Robson*



## REGION

**SIX (Saskatchewan)**

- by Glenn Tait

**T**he story in Saskatchewan is still the wet weather. Some areas seem to have had a full three years of rain in just three months! The extra \$30/unseeded acre benefit from the federal and provincial governments is appreciated, but is still short of the \$50 that the NFU thought was the minimum required for this disaster. As always, we have to explain to taxpayers the shortfalls in world agricultural economics and in our own insurance programs, as well as the cost of maintaining (or recovering) a field until next year with zero income. But, then if it was easy, it wouldn't be farming!

In June I attended the Western Canadian Farm Progress Show in Regina wearing my official NFU hat. I sat beside representatives from the CWB, KAP, WRAP, APAS, and the CFA as we released to the media the Travecon report on railway overcharging written by John Edsforth. John couldn't attend but was available by phone for questions. Under the revenue cap formula the railways may make up to 'X' amount of dollars in total, 'X' to be adjusted by a costing review every four years so that "efficiencies" gained by the railroads (read: abandonment and consolidation) are returned to the shippers. Except for an evaluation of the cost of repairing hopper car, a costing review of rail transport hasn't been done since 1992. Now, by the agreed upon formula, 'X' averages about \$200 million/year extra over and above a reasonable profit for CN and CP. Ka-Ching! We all urged the federal government to immediately do a costing review, no excuses. So far they are staying with the position that they'd like to, but it's really just not a good time to do it right now.

While I was at the show I also attended an update from the Canadian Wheat Board. CEO Ian White gave a report on the situation in Australia after the demise of the Australian Wheat Board, something I'd been curious about for a while. Uncoordinated transport now results in bottlenecks and delays and uncoordinated mixing means that Australian "branding" is no longer useful. It

seems that customers are so unhappy with both quality assurance and delivery delays that Australian wheat, which used to sell in Japan for \$99/t premium over other Pacific N.W. grain, is now sold at a \$27 discount.

Elwin Hermanson and Jim Smolik of the Canadian Grain Commission also held an informational meeting at the Progress Show. Most of the presentation centered on the new more virulent strain of Fusarium fungus and worries about Ochratoxin A and other mycotoxins in stored grain, but questions from the attendees covered many topics. Budgetary constraints were mentioned and it was explained that since CGC fees have been frozen for years, 50% of the funding now comes directly from government. This may have been to prepare us for further downsizing. When at one point Smolik said that no one knew that GM flax would be such a problem, I reminded him that the NFU knew, and that our current president was instrumental in getting Triffid flax deregistered. Later when Elwin Hermanson said that the long promised 'little black box' that will identify grain varieties in the elevator drive-shed is still years away, the 'I-told-you-so' part of my brain heard him admit, "We should have never gotten rid of Kernal Visual Distinguishability."

I'm going to leave you with this picture of our farming world. This July I was at one of the big social events of the summer, the Kramer summer farm equipment auction. I was talking to a neighbour there about the state of farm economics and how, in the few odd years that we do make a profit, our input costs magically rise to gobble up that profit. This neighbour, my friend whom I have known since the first day of grade one, then said, "Too bad we couldn't join together like some kind of union to fight this kind of injustice." I was very surprised to hear that and he was equally surprised when I pulled my union card out of my wallet. Fellow NFUers, never miss a chance to wave our flag, write letters, wear an NFU hat or shirt or give away some NFU pens, or anything of the sort to advertise or to start a conversation. I have a couple of NFU shirts and an NFU front licence plate, but apparently I need more.

*In Union, Glenn Tait*





## SEVEN (Alberta)

### REGION



- by Jan Slomp

On June 5<sup>th</sup> a successful convention was held in Calmar, Alberta. Margo Staniforth decided to no longer be NFU board member or coordinator. Doug Scott and Jan Slomp were chosen as board members representing region 7.

On June 18 and 19 celebrations were held for the start of the farmer owned Battle River Railroad New Gen Coop, with a dance in Forestburg on Friday night and ongoing celebrations and a passenger train ride on Saturday along part of the newly owned track. Many NFU folks were present at the events.

The summer, or for some the lack thereof, of 2010 will go into history as a unique one. In Southern Alberta, many acres didn't get seeded as it was too wet. Central Alberta did get a chance to catch up with years of moisture deficits, and the North continues to suffer from drought. The costs for most beef operations are up, as more winter feed had to be put up in silage or weathered down hay. On the revenue side, culls are worth more in comparison to the last 7 years. Historically, and corrected for inflation, prices are still low. Last year in response to the question of how things were in the beef sector Minister Gerry Ritz said, "my friend Brian Nielsen tells me that everything is fine in the beef industry". For the Nielsen Brothers things are not only fine, they are going to do better as the Moose Jaw beef processing plant is shut down, concentrating the cull cow processing further in Brooks AB. As the shrinking, squealing hog sector out West dances to the tunes of

Olymel with their plant in Red Deer, the beef sector is not far behind.

Most Governments in Canada equate development with prosperity. Nowhere but in Alberta, however, has big business such a free hand in development. Government is bending over backwards to throw fuel on every fire to trigger more investment and more development of resources, all the time. The Alberta government is white-washing environmental obstructions by leaky regulation. One example is the Enhanced Recovery Guide for regulation on fresh water use for oil well injection. Another example is reported by board member Doug Scott, about a landfill development in Thorhild County right in the watershed.

The Alberta government constantly undermines social infrastructure that gives equity to citizens, while it gives huge subsidies to R&D that targets the advancement of the private sector. For instance, it has invested billions on carbon capture and storage. Also, the Alberta government finances massive campaigns to lull "Rig Pigs" and "Joe the Plummer" believing that all that development is for the public good. Week-after-week the Alberta government buys full page ads in every weekly publication to spread lies about the need for upgrading the electricity grid with more than \$16 billion in construction, or with information how environmentally sound the tar sands development. Finally, the Alberta government passed a barrage of laws against the public interest, undermining rights of citizens. The Minister declared projects for the public good, without hearings or any form of public scrutiny in the decision-making. Examples are Bill 46, Bill 19, and Bill 50. Law firms in Alberta are so in the feeding trough of government, that it is virtually impossible to find a firm that will represent ordinary citizens without preconceived outcomes in the hearings.

Journalist/Author Andrew Nikiforuk recently published a critique about how massive energy development in Alberta will become increasingly a curse for all of Canada's economic well-being. The Canadian dollar is highly priced due to being the number one energy supplier of the US. The Canadian dollar is now completely pegged to the oil price. The high dollar is fueling, at least temporary, (over)consumption and manufacturing sectors,

(continued on page 23...)



## REGION

**EIGHT (B.C./Peace River)**

- BY NEIL PEACOCK

Greetings from the mighty dry Peace! We have continued this year into another dry year. This year is one of the worst on record. After several years our sub soil reserves are depleted, and it is making for harsh conditions in the Alberta and BC Peace.

The recently announced federal program of \$50.00 per head will sure help to go a long ways, as it almost will buy one bale for livestock farmers. Many of the ranchers I have talked with are saying enough is enough, and are selling out their stock due to the drought and the ridiculous price for feed. It is disconcerting how we as people want to take advantage of others. My how our society has changed.

Mother Nature has been able to do what the parasitical corporations and the bureaucrats have not been able to do: drive many out of the business and off their farms.

The outlook is not that good for the grain farmers either. High input costs coupled with the low yields from the drought, is making things tough on them as well.

With the dryness will come the winter struggle of game raiding feed stacks, as there is little for them to eat as well.

On a more positive note, the members of Region 8 had a very good AGM enjoyed by all that attended.

Probably the single most important issue discussed at the AGM, is the plans of the Alberta government and the essential resource ... water. The government has been working on a water management plan secretly, with no public consultation on the process. The lack of transparency from both the federal and provincial governments is a worrisome thing.

We do look forward to the convention in the fall and look forward to seeing you all there.

*In Union,  
Neil and Cathy Peacock*

## **NFU Board Members and Offices**

### **Regional Offices:**

Region 1: Tax: 559 Route 390, Rowena, NB E7H 4N2 Ph: (506) 273-4328  
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 Region 3: RR#2, Godfrey, ON K0H 1T0 Ph: 888-273-5545 (in Ont.) or (613) 273-5545 (outside Ont.)  
 Region 5: Newdale Shopping Centre, 2999B Pembina Hwy., Winnipeg, MB R3T 2H5 Ph: (204) 261-0500  
 Region 6: 2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6 Ph: (306) 652-9465

**National Officers and Directors:** Terry Boehm, President, Allan, SK; Dave Lewington, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President (Policy), Lavigne, ON; Don Mills, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President (Operations), Granton, ON; Joan Brady, Women's President, Dashwood, ON; Kathleen Charpentier, Women's Vice President, Castor, AB; Kalissa Regier, Youth President, Laird, SK, Cammie Harbottle, Youth Vice President, Tatamagouche, NS; Randall Affleck, Region 1 Coordinator, Bedeque, PEI; Betty Brown, Region 1 Board Member, Summerfield, NB; Sean McGivern, Region 3 Coordinator, Desboro, ON; Colleen Ross, Region 3 Board Member, Iroquois, ON; Ann Slater, Region 3 Board Member, Lakeside, ON; Ian Robson, Region 5 Coordinator, Deleau, MB; Bev Stow, Region 5 Board Member; Glenn Tait, Region 6 Coordinator, Meota, SK; Ed Sagan, Region 6 Board Member, Melville, SK; Dixie Green, Region 6 Board Member, Swift Current, SK; Jan Slomp, Region 7 Coordinator, Rimbey, AB; Doug Scott, Region 7 Board Member, Waskatenau, AB; Peter Eggers, Region 8 Coordinator, La Glace, AB; Neil Peacock, Region 8 Board Member, Sexsmith, AB.

**Women's Advisory Committee:** Susan Fitzpatrick, Charlottetown, PE; Kim Delaney, Palmerston, ON; Kate Storey, Grandview, MB; Marcella Pedersen, Cut Knife, SK; Mandy Melnyk, Debolt, AB.

**Youth Advisory Committee:** Erin Fyfe, Breadalbane, PE; Caitlin Hall, Palmerston, ON; Krysta Chickak, Smoky Lake, AB; Lara Smith, Rycroft, AB.



# NFU actions spurs Ontario Government to modify changes to microFIT Program

—by Ann Slater, NFU Region 3 Board Member

As part of the Green Energy Act, passed last fall, the Ontario Government established a microFIT (Feed-in Tariff) program. The program provides a twenty-year guaranteed price, for renewable energy produced by small renewable energy projects under 10 kilowatts and sold into the distribution grid. Although the NFU in Region 3 has many concerns about focus and implementation of the Green Energy Act, we support the microFIT program. The price offered for energy produced by solar photovoltaic projects, either roof-mounted or ground-mounted units, was 80.2 cents per kWh.

The Ontario Power Authority (OPA) was swamped with applications, mostly from farmers willing to take the risk of erecting ground-mounted solar units. By the end of June the OPA had received 16,000 microFIT applications, and around 80% of the applications were for ground-mounted solar units. Of the approximately 13,000 applications for ground-mounted units, only 2,300 had received contracts or conditional offers from OPA. The other 10,700 applicants, many who had submitted applications last winter, were waiting for OPA to process their applications.

On Friday, July 2, the OPA announced that the rate for ground-mounted solar projects would be 58.8 cents per kWh, and only those applicants who had received contracts or conditional offers would be grandfathered at 80.2 cents. The rate for roof-top models would remain at 80.2 cents. Farmers, including many NFU members, were completely blindsided by this sudden drop in the rate so soon after the implementation of the microFIT program. Farmers, farm organizations, and the solar

industry voiced their outrage at this decision to the media, politicians and the OPA.

The NFU Region 3 sent a letter to the OPA asking it to keep the same rate for ground-mounted and roof-mounted solar units under 10 kW until at least the 2011 review of the microFIT program. If the OPA remained committed to lowering the rate, we requested that all 16,000 applications already submitted for microFIT projects be grandfathered under the rate of 80.2 cents per kWh.

In this case, the outcry from farmers and others with an interest in ground-mounted solar units was heard. On August 13, the OPA announced it would honour the rate of 80.2 cents per kWh for all applications submitted prior to July 2. However, it also announced that the rate for applications for ground-mounted solar projects submitted after July 2 would be 64.2 cents per kWh, while the rate for roof-top units would remain at 80.2 cents.

It is clear the Ontario government and the OPA did not expect farmers to jump at the opportunity provided by the microFIT program. They expected the main interest in solar photovoltaic units to come from homeowners and businesses in urban areas, where roof-top models would be the logical option. Farm buildings are generally not suited to roof-top models because they do not have the structural integrity, the correct orientation towards the sun, or are shaded. With land available, ground-mounted units are a more practical way for farms to produce solar energy.

Although the public pressure did force the OPA to make some changes regarding ground-mounted solar units, we now have a microFIT program which favours urban areas over farmers. The OPA will see far fewer applications in the future for ground-mounted solar now that the rate has been lowered, and any trust farmers had in the OPA and the Ontario Government has been stretched to the limit.

—nfu—





# The International Fight against Terminator Technology begins again

- by Martha Robbins

**T**erminator technology uses genetic engineering to create plants that produce sterile seeds in the second generation—in other words seeds that will not reproduce themselves. One of the key rationalizations made to support the technology is that it would protect patented seeds from being stored and re-used in subsequent years, therefore guaranteeing companies that their seeds will have to be purchased each and every year.

At the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity COP 8 meeting in Curitiba, Brazil in March 2006, farmers (including NFU member Karen Pedersen) and other citizens from around the world celebrated a victory against Terminator Technology when an international moratorium was upheld and strengthened. Unfortunately, proponents of the technology, which was developed in the 1990's by a company subsequently purchased by Monsanto, are back and pushing hard for the moratorium on Terminator technology to be lifted.

In October 2010, nearly two hundred parties (including 168 signatory countries) to the international Convention on Biological Diversity will meet in Nagoya, Japan at the COP 10 meeting. And at these meetings, proponents of Terminator technology will be arguing from a slightly different angle.

The latest justification for allowing Terminator technology to be unleashed on the world is that it would help to contain genetic contamination. According to La Via Campesina (the international peasant and small-scale farmer movement of which the NFU is a founding member), "Industry is now claiming that Terminator is needed to contain genetic contamination (transgene flow) of food crops and other natural life forms from genetically-engineered DNA in non-food crops; in essence, as a precautionary, environmental necessity." There is some irony to this latest argument: we need Terminator technology to protect food seed stocks from contamination by genetically modified (GM) crops engineered for agrofuel production. This in light of earlier industry claims that GM crops would not cross-pollinate or create contamination problems in non-GM crops or the natural environment. La Via Campesina points out that, "It is highly unlikely that the industry that created the



problem of genetic pollution will solve it with more biotechnology."

The potential impact of Terminator technology on farmers is immense. La Via Campesina warns that, "Under the guise of environmental security for GM crops, industry will use the new generation of Terminator technologies to tighten its grasp on proprietary germplasm, and restrict the rights of farmers to re-plant harvested seeds. Further, the likely prospect of contamination of food crops by GM crops engineered with Terminator places the entire global food supply at imminent risk, and it therefore poses unacceptable threats to food and seed sovereignty and agro-biodiversity."

The push is on now to re-invigorate the campaign against Terminator technology and to raise the alarm against the intense pressure to lift the moratorium at the upcoming COP 10 meetings in Japan, and again in November at the United Nations climate talks in Cancun, Mexico.

For more information on Terminator, see the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network's website ([www.cban.ca](http://www.cban.ca)) and the Ban Terminator Campaign website ([www.banterminator.org](http://www.banterminator.org)). For information on La Via Campesina's call to action see "La Via Campesina Call to Action—Help Stop Terminator's Return!" from July 28, 2010 on their website ([www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org)) —nfu—



# We lost the battle, but we intend to win the war

—by Dianne Dowling, President of NFU Local 316

On Monday, August 9, 2010, about 150 officers of the Kingston Police and the Ontario Provincial Police ensured the dairy herd from the Frontenac Institution prison farm was removed from the farm, and trucked to Waterloo, Ontario for sale by auction.

A total of 24 people were arrested August 8 and 9, for peacefully blocking the road at the entrance to the institution, a minimum security facility.

Nine people were arrested Sunday, August 8, when 500 demonstrators and about 30 city police were present. For four hours, supporters of the prison farms were able to block four cattle trucks from entering Frontenac Institution. Around 7 PM, the demonstrators agreed to let the trucks enter the prison grounds, in return for a promise from police and Correctional Service of Canada that no trucks would leave until after 6 AM Monday. Three more trucks arrived overnight.

When about 150 demonstrators arrived Monday morning, there were about 150 city and provincial police officers, blocking the road, and ringing the four corners of the intersection.

When the first loaded cattle truck approached the entrance, some demonstrators peacefully blocked the road, and several were violently arrested by the police. Escorted by a police car, the truck left the institution, unimpeded. More people were arrested when the second truck approached the entrance, an hour or so later.

The police made it clear that any person blocking the road would be arrested immediately and forcefully. With the police outnumbering and overpowering the

demonstrators, prison farm supporters restricted themselves to lawfully picketing the site. By early afternoon, all seven trucks had left the institution, with the heritage purebred, registered Holstein Pen Farm herd on board.

Those arrested include an 87-year-old woman, a 14-year-old girl and her mother, two Royal Military College professors, several farmers including NFU members, a retired corrections officer and a retired minister. People packed the bail hearings to show support. All those jailed were released on bail within a day of their arrest, and have to appear in court in September.

We are shocked and deeply disappointed that the government used violence against peaceful protesters attempting to express the democratic will of the people of Kingston and across Canada.

The Conservative government thinks they can silence us by bullying citizens and removing the cows. But our resolve has only been strengthened, and we will work to restore the prison farms and to counter the government's so-called "tough on crime" agenda — super-prisons, privatization of prisons — and other ideology-driven policies.

Some good news among the bad --

Public access to the sale of this publicly-owned herd was restricted by a police presence and \$1,000 deposit. Even so, a few supporters attended the auction on August 10 and returned to Kingston with four milking cows, an 18-month-old heifer and a four-month-old calf. The calf has been named Hope by its new owner. The 18-month-old heifer was born on February 17, 2009, the week before the prison farm closures were revealed in the press.

—nfu—

**Live updates will continue at:**

**<http://www.twitter.com/prisonfarms>**

**Also follow [www.saveourprisonfarms.ca](http://www.saveourprisonfarms.ca)**



# A surprise visit from Denmark

- by Glenn Tait

One of the great side benefits of being in the NFU is meeting great people from all over the world. Hans and Elena Kjeldsen, dairy farmers from Denmark, were at our national office in Saskatoon last week (Friday, August 13<sup>th</sup>) and the guys there had the wonderful idea that the couple could drop by our farm for lunch on their way to Edmonton. The Kjeldsen's are on a cross-Canada tour, stopping and talking to farmers wherever they can.

Just after 1:00pm a big Chrysler 300 with New York plates rolled into my parent's driveway, and then the five of us spent a very pleasant couple of hours talking about farming, families, government, and geography at the kitchen table. As usual Mom worked too hard and cooked too much. Never mind a hundred mile diet, almost everything on the table, right down to the apple pie came from within a hundred yards of the house.

Hans came into dairy farming by accident. He was educated as a pilot by the Danish Air Force, but circumstances evolved so that he wound up taking over the family farm. Their children and mine are both fifth generation on the same farm and their operation is even physically the same size as ours: about 1,000 ha, but worth over 30 times as much! All five generations of each family have lived in the same house, though the Kjeldsen manor looks more like a 19<sup>th</sup> century Earl's estate. My house is a simple Grain Grower No. 1 mail order plan, built in 1915.

Farming pays a lot in Denmark, but somehow most of the income gets used up there too. Although the subsidy rate is over \$160/acre, whether you till the land or not, the income tax rate is 1.5-2 times ours and the general sales tax (VAT) is at 25%. Intergenerational transfer of that very valuable land is expensive too, as all transfers are assessed and taxed.

Farming is highly regulated, as you might expect in a densely populated and still productive country. Cattle are limited to one cow/ha (1,000 cattle for the Kjeldsen dairy), so feedlots are out and Denmark imports a lot of beef, much of it from Argentina. It seems the situation is not the same for pigs. The Danes slaughter about 20 million a year, five for every person in the country. Pigs have a long history in Denmark, I have been told stories of how annoyed my Scottish grandfather was when he



*Photo: Hans and Elena Kjeldsen.*

saw a wrapper for Danish bacon in the kitchen trash over 60 years ago. Pigs were part of his farm too. Animal housing is also very important in a small country with minimal space requirements enforced and periodic mandatory facility upgrades needed.

Weather is a lot more stable and less of a constant worry in Denmark than it is on the Canadian prairies or where the arctic and tropical currents mix it up on our East coast. But, they do have to worry about soil, water, and even air pollution. Depending on the wind direction, that brown industrial smog can get pretty thick.

The high tax rate and intense regulation are burdensome, but result in a well managed life for most Danes. The farmers have a say in what those production rules are, as they all must belong to a single umbrella agricultural organization. Also, University tuition is free, and students even receive a further \$8000/year.

We could have spent all day or more talking about farming or about whose kids were doing what, but the Kjeldsen's had to be on their way. I've been on farms in Scotland and Australia, and learned much about them in Germany, Mexico, Spain, and luckily, now Denmark. As my grandmother used to say, "It's all just the same, but different." —nfu—





# Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement is offensive in every sense

—by Terry Boehm

This fall (in October) the fourth round of CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) negotiations will be taking place in Ottawa. This is a so-called bilateral agreement between the European Union and Canada. It must be noted that this agreement is in reality between Canada and the 26 member states of the European Union, and therefore is hardly bilateral. That being said, the European Commission is negotiating on behalf of the member states and is aggressively pushing an extreme right-wing agenda. Coupled with strong Canadian leanings this same way, the agreement has provided a platform for bringing forward legislation that would likely never pass on its own. Essentially CETA is a “lets get it in the back door” approach from both sides. This is also exacerbated with a semi-secret negotiation process, where the “parties” have agreed not to disclose the content of the text while negotiations are going on.

The NFU was able to get a leaked draft text of the CETA agreement last March. The scope and reach of the agreement is breathtaking, requiring compliance from all levels of government including provincial and municipal. It is clear that the Europeans want both access to our resources and access to all government procurement actions down to municipal level, as well as all public institutions like hospitals, public utilities, provincial insurance schemes, etc. It really is a recolonization of Canada with our federal government laying down the welcome mat. However, it is not just a recolonization by Europeans, but colonization by international business interests via the European Commission.

Agriculture is subjected to a wide range of measures in this agreement. The procurement provisions would open up any agreement by

public hospitals, universities, and all other government institutions, to make decisions to access local food. In addition decisions to favour local businesses, disadvantaged sectors of the population, etc. would all be subjected to this agreement and severely handicapped again by the procurement provisions of the CETA. Article IV pg. 206 of the agreement states: *1. With respect to any measure regarding covered procurement, each party, including its procuring entities, shall accord immediately and unconditionally to the goods and services of the other Party and to the suppliers of the other Party offering such goods and services, treatment no less favourable than the treatment the Party, including its procuring entities, accords to (European Union: its own) (Canada: domestic) goods, services and suppliers.*

The International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants 1991 Act (UPOV 91) is legislation also being called for by the Europeans in the draft text. This is likely to be agreed to by Canada, as various Canadian governments have tried to introduce this highly restrictive and powerful form of Plant Breeders Rights (PBR) legislation in the past. It was only the NFU and its citizen allies that stopped this from being put in place in Canada. Canada currently has PBR legislation based on the much less restrictive version called UPOV 78. This is sufficient to live up to all of our trade agreement obligations. UPOV 91 would severely limit and could outright stop a farmers’ ability to save, reuse, exchange and sell seed. This would be accomplished by the breeder, or its designate, having the ability to control the conditioning (cleaning and treating) and the stocking (storing or warehousing) of the seed. No farmer would plant seed contaminated by weed seeds, which if cleaning was restricted, would severely impact the success of his/her crops.

In addition, the provision of a cascading right in UPOV 91 would allow the collection of royalties at any point in the food system. The so-called farmer’s

(continued on page 19...)



(CETA is offensive..., from page 18)

privilege is dependent on governments granting this, and is trumped by the provisions above. Essentially the age-old practices of farmer seed saving and reuse would be restricted and/or eliminated, and placed in someone else's hands. These hands are interested in forcing farmers to buy all of their seeds every year at exorbitant prices. Control of seed gives control of the food system and concentrates immense power, in a few hands. Farmers will find their precarious financial situation even more tenuous if they are forced to buy all their seeds, rather than saving some.

In those crops (and in the future, animals) with intellectual property rights attached as in PBR's or gene patents, the EU is calling for the most chilling enforcement procedures ever seen. (These provisions would apply to all patents, copyrights, etc.). They are calling for both the right to issue an interlocutory injunction to prevent infringement, and the precautionary seizure of all assets of an alleged infringer. This would mean for a farmer that he/she could be issued an order to prevent planting a crop with his/her own seed. Moreover, if he/she was alleged to have infringed he/she could be subjected to the seizure of crops, land, equipment, and the blocking of bank accounts before the court hears the case. As stated in [EC: Article 19] pg 252: 2. *An interlocutory injunction may also be issued to order the seizure or delivery up of the goods suspected of infringing an intellectual property right so as to prevent their entry into or movement within the channels of commerce.* 3. *In the case of an infringement committed on a commercial scale, the Parties shall ensure that, if the applicant demonstrates circumstances likely to endanger the recovery of damages, the judicial authorities may order the precautionary seizure of the movable and immovable property of the alleged infringer, including the blocking of his/her bank accounts and other assets.*

These provisions if adopted would put every farmer at such great peril from simple accusation of infringing that they would likely buy all their seeds, etc., just to avoid these measures being used against them. Even if the accusation was wrong, the average farmer would be unable to fight because of the expense involved. If that is not enough there is also a call to extend patents and Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) by the length of time of time that it takes a regulatory body to approve a product for use or sale. If a minor use is found for the product not originally claimed, the IPR/patent term would be extended again. This would not only add to

the term of the "right" but would increase the costs of everything from seed, pesticides, and drugs.

Our healthcare budgets are comprised of a factor of nearly 50% drug and medical supply expenditures and anything adding to those costs, as this will, is a direct transfer of funds from taxpayers to big pharmaceutical corporations. It is interesting to note that public healthcare costs skyrocketed after extended drug patents were granted in the early 90's. The data provided for regulators to base their decisions on is to be confidential as well. Public oversight agencies will not be able to disclose the basis on which they make their decisions. They will also not be able to use this data for their own research.

Regulations are to be harmonized in this agreement with food inspection, as an example, to be accepted by the other Party without verification (except in exceptional circumstances or new trade in that item). Therefore something inspected in Europe is to be accepted by all provinces and territories in Canada. The same applies for Europe in regards to our inspection services, except in exceptional circumstances.

In the draft text supply management and the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) are to be dealt with in a later chapter. It is likely due to the hostility of the European Commission that these measures will be attacked and jeopardized. They are also captured in the general text about removing all forms of domestic support and export support.

For those Canadian farmers growing Genetically Modified (GM) crops who expect that this agreement will help to open up European markets, this is simply not going to be the case. All European GM regulations are exempted from the terms of this agreement in Appendix 1B. Indeed, Canada's chief negotiator, Steve Verheul, stated in a briefing call that Canada was only seeking an increase in the adventitious levels of GM material acceptable by the EU, and expected little more.

(continued on page 21...)



# Demonstration successfully draws attention to important issues

—by Kevin Wipf

On July 6<sup>th</sup> about 40 farmers, politicians, and citizens participated in an NFU organized demonstration held in front of the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel in Saskatoon. The purpose of the demonstration was to draw attention to several important issues, including: the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) currently being negotiated between Canada and the European Commission, the need for a railway costing review, the delisting of 53 producer car loading sites by CN rail, and to press governments for a timely response to the flooding crisis on the prairies.

The timing of the event allowed the NFU to put these issues front-and-centre, as the federal, provincial, and territorial ministers of agriculture arrived in Saskatoon for their annual meetings and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture prepared for its annual roundtable with other farm groups, later that week. The CFA deliberately excluded the NFU from participation in the roundtable. When the NFU inquired about the exclusion, CFA officials responded that they did not want any disruptions at the meeting. It appears that groups likely to be completely obedient were preferred.

The NFU demonstration was an overwhelming success as many members of the media showed up to cover the entire event, and it received considerable newspaper, radio, and TV coverage. Farmers held large signs containing such slogans as “Railways Violating Farmers Rights” and “Producer Cars Are A Farmer’s Right.” Also, NFU President Terry Boehm gave a speech that summarized and highlighted the importance of the issues on the street using a portable sound system.

Immediately following the meeting, a press conference was held at the Delta Bessborough

Hotel. The list of speakers included current Liberal MP Ralph Goodale, former NFU president Nettie Wiebe, CWB director Cam Goff, Producer Car Shippers of Canada representative and current CWB director Bill Woods, Battle River Railway representative Howard Vincett, former CWB director Ian McCreary, and current NFU president Terry Boehm.

Throughout the day the demonstration participants argued the following:

- ***CETA poses a direct threat to Canadian farmers and society at large.*** CETA will grant corporations control over seed varieties through the adoption of UPOV 91. Farmers will ultimately be prevented from saving their own seeds. Other concerns about CETA include the ability to undertake the precautionary seizure of assets such as land and farm machinery from anyone even accused of infringing on a patent. These negotiations are continuing at a rapid pace, with the next round planned for Ottawa in October. (See Boehm’s article on CETA on page 18 of this issue for further details.)

(continued on page 21...)



*(Demonstration draws attention..., from page 20)*

- ***An immediate railway costing review is needed to address obvious over-charging by the railways.*** Farmers are once again being taken advantage of by the railway monopolies. According to the recent Travacon study commissioned by the Canadian Wheat Board, farmers are currently being over-charged by the rail companies for shipping their grain. Over the last two years farmers were charged an average of \$199 million over-and-above what they would have had to pay under previous legislation. That converts to an average over-charge of \$6.87 per tonne. The federal government has stated that it will not consider any further action the current service review, which is well behind schedule, is completed. Participants argued that the service review and costing review should be undertaken simultaneously.
- ***Producer car loading sites are a farmers right and therefore the railways cannot simply shut them down at their will.*** In 2009 CN rail announced that it would delist 53 producer car loading sites. Producer car loading sites represent a cheaper more convenient option for farmers who do not reside close to main lines. Producer cars save farmers anywhere from \$1000 to \$2000 per car, and producer car usage has climbed from 1,466 in 1998-99 to 9,029 cars in 2008-09. By eliminating access to these sites, the railways effectively

destroy the ability of farmers to exercise their right and realize these efficiency gains.

- ***The flooding disaster on the prairies requires a more effective and timely response from the federal and provincial governments.*** Current programs are not capable of addressing the disaster adequately. First, they are not responsive enough. Farmers need money quickly in order to manage flooded land. Second, technicalities within the programs – the “structural change adjustment” in AgriStability – will mean that some affected farmers will not qualify for any funding at all. Farmers need a full \$50 per acre payment on all unseeded acres, and an additional \$50 per acre top-up payment limited to 2,000 acres per farm.

At the conclusion of their meetings the federal and provincial governments responded with the announcement of a \$30 per flooded acre (totalling \$450 million) 60-40 cost-shared program, to be drawn from existing funds in the AgriRecovery program.

In the end, the CFA’s snub actually helped the NFU’s cause. The demonstration succeeded in drawing attention to several important issues either ignored or downplayed by the agriculture ministers, and there has been scant evidence that anything of significance actually came out of the CFA roundtable.

—nfu—

*(CETA is offensive..., from page 19)*

The threats to Canadian agriculture and farmers are clear in this agreement. The broader scope of the agreement will affect all Canadians. What is particularly vexing is the speed at which the negotiations are proceeding and the relative secrecy. These governments and negotiators are our governments and negotiators, and yet they agree to keep the text from us. There has to be a demand that we be informed of all aspects of the negotiations and text and that the public interest be respected and enhanced. All too often our governments confuse their role as acting for us and in the public trust, to that of making sure they get out of the way of corporate interests no matter how short-sighted they are.

The NFU is organizing a campaign to stop this agreement. We will need all of our tools, allies, and commitment to derail this and its content. In the coming weeks fact sheets, petitions, letters, and other campaign materials will be distributed. Take the time to call and write your politicians at all levels about this and fight for all of us. The CETA goes beyond the World Trade Organization and Multilateral Agreement on Investment. We cannot let it proceed as it is. Join the fight for our seeds, hospitals, local food systems, local businesses, public utilities, supply management, the CWB, and our autonomy, in the face of corporate domination. We have little to gain and everything to lose.

—nfu—





## *We Remember ...*

### **Pioneering organic farmer dies**



#### **(HENRY) ELMER LAIRD**

A pioneering figure in organic farming, Elmer Laird, died Saturday, July 17, 2010.

Born in the Swift Current area in 1924, Laird grew up during the Depression on the family farm and enlisting in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War.

In 1947, he settled on his own farm south of Davidson and became the director of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union District 10 from 1952 to 1964.

In 1969, he married Gladys McKay and began organic farming. Laird soon became a vocal advocate for organic farming and in raising concerns over the environmental and human health risks of pesticide use.

Laird, his wife and other National Farmers Union members founded the Back to the Farm Research Foundation in 1973 to encourage the development and further research of organic farming.

Federal politician and organic farmer David Orchard first met Laird in 1975. Orchard said Laird greatly influenced him and others in the agricultural community.

"I was concerned with the impact of chemicals on our health that's what motivated me at the beginning. After that I contacted Elmer (Laird) and we had a friendship that lasted over 35 years. He was always a guide and a colleague and all of those things. He was concerned about anything that would help make a healthier planet," he said.

Laird and his wife established the Canadian Organic Producers' Marketing Co-op Ltd. in 1983. Located in Girvin, it was the first certified organic producers co-operative that sold organic products throughout North America and Europe.

Laird leased his farmland in 2001 to the Back to the Farm Research Foundation. His farmland was turned into an organic research and demonstration farm -- the first of its kind in Canada.

Laird managed the research and demonstration farm and continued to be an advocate against pesticides and genetically modified organisms that require heavy chemical spraying.

Laird was recognized for his contributions to organic farming in 2006 when he received a commemorative medal for the Saskatchewan centennial. He is also a 2008 inductee into the Saskatchewan Agriculture Hall of Fame.

Laird died from natural causes at the Davidson Health Centre. Gladys died in 1999. Although Laird left behind no children, Orchard described his death as the passing of a "father and mentor of many of the organic practitioners in Western Canada."

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*(Region 3 Report, from page 9)*

or global plan to combat this. What we need more than anything here in Canada is a National Food and Energy policy, which involves energy policy and agriculture policy people working together.

I don't want you to read this and feel helpless. Rather I want you to take from this information a new view on how to start to build resilience into your future, empowering yourself, and preparing for a new time in history. It has often been said that what goes around comes around, or once a man twice a boy, or what goes up must come down, everything repeats itself given enough time. So, we may not return to horsepower farming on a mass scale, as I am sure a few NFU members like Tony

and Fran McQuail or Ken and Martha Laing might like to see. But, I do know the future will indeed be very different than the recent past. Just in case it doesn't turn out that way, I have my Buggy in the shed and any my harness oiled up and ready to go!!!

So, heads up and noses down to the grindstone, we have a big task ahead of us all in the very near future, and one that will come in the lifetime of most of us. Let's be ready for this next new challenge. Be careful if you pass me and my horse on the road the next time you travel through Grey County.

*In Union, Sean McGivern*

*(Region 7 Report, from page 12)*

while export-dependent agriculture is increasingly suffering. All that energy development is not contributing to Alberta's or Canadian government savings, nor is any of the government's extra spending on protecting these other economic sectors in order to weather the high dollar.

Nikiforuk calls Ed Stelmach the Emir of Alberta. Nikiforuk sees many similarities between the way Emir's in Saudi Arabia are dictatorially ruling their country on the bounty of oil, and how the more than 35-year long Tory government is doing the

same in Alberta. The fact that Steven Harper is the son of a former Imperial Oil executive, and the fact that he allows the rest of the Canadian economy to suffer from the free flow of dirty Alberta oil, makes him in my eyes just as much an Emir. I suggest we from now on quit calling him Prime Minister and start naming him the Emir of Canada, as that title will help the defeat if elections come about.

*Yours truly, Jan Slomp*

## *We Remember ...*

**GLENN DOUGLAS TABBERT** — Passed away suddenly as the result of an accident on Thursday, July 22, 2010 at the age of 51 years. Glenn Tabbert of Pembroke, Ontario was a loved husband and soulmate of Kathy Tabbert (nee Chapeskie). Loving father of Nickolas, Stephanie and Andrew. Predeceased by daughter Stacey. Cherished son of Gerald and Lois Tabbert, Pembroke. Dear brother of Heather Steege (husband Grant), Pembroke; Bruce Tabbert (wife Shelley), Beachburg; and Laurie Anne Kaufmann (husband Tom), Bradford. Dear son-in-law of Clarence and Verla Chapeskie, Pembroke. Brother-in-law of Kim Maschke (Steve), Pembroke. Glenn will be sadly missed by his aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, friends and his dog Sid. As an expression of sympathy, donations to Glenn and Kathy's Children's Education Fund (cheques payable to Kathy Tabbert), Stacey Tabbert Bursary Fund (cheques payable to Renfrew County Educational Enrichment Fund), the Ottawa Heart Institute or the charity of your choice would be appreciated. Online condolences/donations are available at <http://www.malcolmandeavitt.com>

**The National Farmers Union would also like to extend its sympathy to the families of NFU members:**

**PETER SHWAYKOWSKI** of Roblin, Manitoba; **ARIE VAN LINDENBERG**, Renfrew, Ontario; and **JOE LARONDE** of Pembroke, Ontario.





# NFU 41<sup>ST</sup> Annual Convention

## December 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010



**Hilton Garden Inn Downtown  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan**

*Convention Theme: Economics of Alternatives*

### Keynote Speakers include:

**YANN MARTEL** - Yann Martel is author of several books, including the *Life of Pi* and *Beatrice and Virgil*. He won the Man Booker Prize in 2002 and is currently a scholar-in-residence at the University of Saskatchewan. Yann is currently working on a project entitled *What is Stephen Harper Reading?*, where he sends a book accompanied by a personal letter to the Prime Minister every two weeks. The project was inspired by the Harper government's lack of recognition of the arts community in Canada. The aim is to offer the Prime Minister books that appeal directly to quiet moments of self-reflection, what Yann refers to as *stillness*. The project is documented on-line at <http://www.whatisstephenharperreading.ca/>



**WAYNE ROBERTS** - Wayne Roberts holds a PhD in social and economic history from the University of Toronto, and has been extensively involved in food, health, justice, and environmental issues. He has played leading roles in such organizations as the Toronto Food Policy Council, the Coalition for a Green Economy, and Food Secure Canada. Roberts has also written for *NOW* magazine. Finally, Wayne has won the Canadian Environment Award in 2002 and the Canadian Eco-Hero Award in 2008. Wayne's website address is <http://wayneroberts.ca/>

### Reserve your room today.

**A block of rooms is being held, but only until October 29, 2010.**

*Be sure to say it is for the NFU Convention when booking.*

**Room rates are \$159 plus taxes (king or 2 queens, includes parking)**

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